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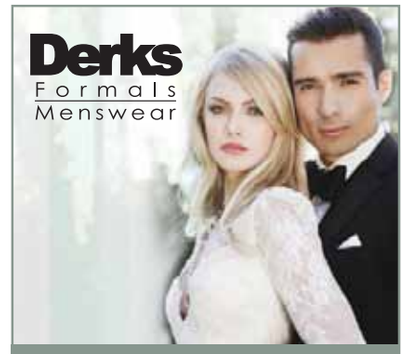

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Starry night

NHL's best face off in Ohio. Page 25.

PATIO WEATHER IN JANUARY

Shorts and T-shirts were among the attire on the Ship and Anchor Pub's patio Sunday afternoon. Temperatures in Calgary soared to 17 C as of 3 p.m., according to Environment Canada, shattering the previous record high for Jan. 25 of 13.1 C, set in 2007. The record low, meanwhile, stands at -38.6 C, set in 1997. That's a difference of more than 55 degrees from Sunday afternoon. ROBSON FLETCHER/METRO

Huge drop in illegal grow-ops

Marijuana. Illegal grows way down, while legal operations create new concerns

MORGAN MODJESKI
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Calgary has seen dramatic drop in arrests, charges and search warrants related to illegal marijuana grow-ops since 2009, but legal weed operations are posing a growing challenge for local law enforcement.

Offences connected to illegal grow-ops plunged 58 per cent, according to police data provided to Metro. But while those figures have declined, the number of people growing legally is on the rise, according to Alberta's Law Enforcement Response Team (ALERT).

"Many of the same people that previously we had arrested for illegal grow operations now suddenly have medical marijuana permits," said CPS Staff Sgt. Keith Hurley, who oversees ALERT's Green Team, which monitors illegal drug production.

"I'm not saying they all do but I'm saying there are an awful lot of linkages there."

He explained the number of legal grow-ops ALERT has come across either through tips or investigation has been fluctuating, with a total of seven in 2011, 77 in 2013 and 45 in 2014.

The higher numbers could pose challenges for law enforcement when it comes to trafficking investigations and offences.

"If somebody is operating and they have a medicinal permit and they're using it as a ruse ... it's a lot more difficult to prove and it takes a lot more resources and a lot more time."

Ed Jensen, president of the Alberta Real Estate Association, said illegal residential grow-ops present a number of issues around health and safety.

"They're a concern to all of us because of the end results," he said.

"Marijuana grow-ops, in my mind, it's really simple. They're a criminal operation for profit, bottom-line, and the criminals don't care what happens to these properties."

"They alter the structure of the properties, and all of those things, at the end of the day, create structural damages to the property and health hazards to the families."

In March 2014, Health Canada ended its program allowing the production of marijuana in individual residences, with licensed commercial facilities set to take their place. However, an interim injunction filed in 2014 means some permit holders can still produce in their homes.

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More post-secondary students seeking loans

Metro analysis.
Group of those getting financial aid grows by more than twice the number of enrolments

JEREMY NOLAIS
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Alberta post-secondary learners are flocking to provincial and federal loans at a rate more than double that of student enrolment, a Metro analysis has found.

Between 2008-09 and 2012-13, the total number of learners enrolled in a college, university or polytechnics jumped by 9,483. But over that same period, the total count of those receiving some form of provincial or federal aid shot up by 20,939.

Former students such as P.J. Lavergne know all too well how difficult it can be to come out of school with tens of thousands in debt.

He graduated from an applied degree program at Mount Royal University in 2009 with about $20,000 in student loans owed. Fast-forward a half-decade, and he's paid back about $3,000.

"I'm just not repaying it at the pace the government would like, I'm sure. Oh well," he said. "They'd like me to be paying about $3,000 a month, and that's way out of my budget, and I'm not even working in my field (journalism)."

"It's kind of depressing to think about it in the long run," Lavergne added. "It's first and foremost what I have to think about before retiring or a mortgage or any of that stuff."

Lavergne's situation is actually far from the worst.

A BMO study last fall found that Albertans expected to spend more ($1,204) on back-to-school items — textbooks, clothing, technology, etc. — than students in any other province.

Josh Stock decided to "bite the bullet" and take out $35,000 in loans to complete a bachelor of science degree at Edmonton's MacEwan University. After graduation, he found few jobs in his chosen field, so he returned to school at NAIT to obtain a civil-engineering degree this fall. He figures he'll owe $45,000 upon graduating for a second time in 2017.

"Depending on my salary, it will probably take eight to 10 years (to pay it back)," Stock said, chuckling. "Hopefully it will be sooner."

There are fears too that the student-debt struggle will only increase, as eight per cent of post-secondary students collectively face $21 million in additional tuition fees next fall after the province approved major hikes.

"You add a couple thousand dollars per year — it's not a pretty picture," said Levi Nilson with the University of Calgary Students' Union.

Financial advisor David Popowich says students should take on only the amount they need and immediately draft a repayment plan upon graduation.

"It has to be an amount you can handle, but it has to be done at a pace as quickly as possible," he said.

P.J. Lavergne graduated from Mount Royal University's applied journalism program in 2009 with about $20,000 in student-loan debt. While his amount owed was less than the average Alberta student, he believes it will take years to pay off. MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO

In numbers

- **2008-09.**
  Total students: 260,267
  Percentage of loan or grant recipients: 14.5 per cent
- **2011-12.**
  Total students: 265,501
  Percentage of loan or grant recipients: 20.5 per cent
- **2012-13.**
  Total students: 269,750
  Percentage of loan or grant recipients: 21.8 per cent

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Car2go picks up speed, finds niche as Calgary expands

Car-sharing service.
Now nearing 80,000 users, 2 million rides

ROBSON FLETCHER
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In the coming weeks, a driver somewhere in Calgary is expected turn the key on a car2go for the two-millionth time.

The car-sharing service has seen explosive growth since launching in Calgary in July 2012 and now, with nearly 80,000 memberships, the city boasts the second-most car2go users in any North American market, behind only Vancouver.

"And they're not ahead by much," said Jonathan Wycoco, location manager for car2go in Calgary.

The number of car2go vehicles — all compact Smart cars with the company's distinctive blue logo imprinted on the tiny white bodies — has more than tripled, from 150 at launch to 550 today.

Those vehicles are now spread out over a larger "home area," as well. The portion of the city where you can end a car2go trip has grown by 35 per cent, Wycoco said.

The area now stretches to McKnight and John Laurie Boulevards in the north, 53 Street in the west (with an extra portion jutting out to include Bowness), Glenmore Trail in the south (with an extra portion to include Lakeview), and Blackfoot and Deerfoot Trails in the east.

Shane Dixon moved to Calgary last March, leaving his car back in Ontario and eventually getting rid of it. He relied on Calgary Transit when he first arrived, before getting "hooked" on car2go in the past few months.

"I absolutely love it," he said.

Dixon said his daily commute costs $3.15, one-way, by CTrain, or about $20 by cab. By car2go, he said it's between $6 and $8.

"It's basically a good sweet spot in between a taxi price and public transportation," he said.

Brian Goff, who lives in the Mission area and doesn't own a car, said he mainly gets around by walking and transit but uses car2go to "fill the gap" about two to six times a month when he needs a vehicle to transport groceries or other purchases.

He said he loves the "flexibility" of the on-demand cars, but as a tall man, does feel a little "cramped" driving them around.

"I don't know if it's feasible for them as a business, but I would love it if they offered larger, more traditional cars," Goff said.

A car2go passes a parked car2go in downtown Calgary. The car-sharing service now has 550 compact vehicles available to nearly 80,000 members in the city on a take-a-car/leave-a-car basis. JENNIFER FRIESEN/FOR METRO

Dixon also wished car2go would offer slightly different vehicles, but wasn't too concerned about the small-car-only fleet.

"They could use a little bit more power, but I guess the point is to have a cost-effective, good solid car to get people from point A to point B," he said.

Overall, he figured Calgary's growth is driving the movement toward car sharing.

"People are making a little bit of a shift toward getting rid of cars or not needing cars as often, and I think in cities like Calgary where it's growing so quickly there is a bit of a traffic issue, and people are trying to find ways to save cash," he said. "Getting rid of a car is a great way to do that, but it's still handy to have a vehicle from time to time so I think a service like car2go comes in handy and fits that niche."

Parking

'Buffer space' could provide 300 spaces

City officials are continuing to roll along with a car2go parking pilot that could add hundreds of spaces for the rideshare vehicles to the downtown core, says the city's road boss.

Troy McLeod said estimates suggest there are potentially 300 "buffer space" stalls for the vehicles that are situated in the seven- to eight-metre space between downtown intersections and the first designated parking stall for regular use.

"It definitely provides a good, alternate option for car2go customers because the space is always for them and that way it opes up regular on-street parking for others," he said. "Because their vehicles are uniform in size, we're able to accommodate them in that buffer space — they're both narrower and shorter than an average vehicle."

McLeod said a pilot project that allows for the car2go-only stalls would continue on into the first quarter of 2015 before any final decisions are made.

The cars would still be set back 1.5 metres from the intersection.

JEREMY NOLAIS/METRO

PC Alberta
CALGARY-MOUNTAIN VIEW
PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATION
NOTICE OF NOMINATION MEETING

The Calgary-Mountain View PC Association is seeking nominations for individuals interested in becoming the candidate to represent the constituency and the Progressive Conservative Association of Alberta in the upcoming election. The nomination period to obtain information, complete the nomination papers, and pay the nomination fee will commence January 26th, 2015 and will close at 6 p.m. on February 11, 2015. The nomination meeting (if necessary) will be held between 10 a.m to 6 p.m. on February 21st, 2015 at Renfrew United Church (956 Radnor Avenue N.E.) Voters shall be members in good standing of the PCAA, must ordinarily reside in Calgary-Mountain View, be a Canadian citizen, and be at least 14 years of age. When voting, members must show PCAA Membership card, and two (2) pieces of identication, at least one of which must be photo identication. The boundaries of Calgary-Mountain View are 16th Ave to the Bow River, from Deerfoot Trail to Montgomery.

Interested parties may obtain further information, sets of nomination papers and details of the nomination process from the **Nomination Chairperson, Karen Halliday-Hoult at emerald_pollux@yahoo.ca.**

Alberta to resolve DRP claims

Alberta's provincial government says it will be investing roughly $20 million in an attempt to close roughly 2,000 remaining Disaster Recovery Program (DRP) claims resulting from the 2013 flood that impacted many Southern Alberta communities.

At a news conference in High River Saturday, Premier Jim Prentice said his government would increase advances for ongoing claims to 90 per cent from 50 per cent of eligible funding, and bring on an additional 15 caseworkers to speed up the claim process.

"I would stress that our intent is to accelerate payment, to accelerate reconstruction and at the same time be responsible with the expenditure of taxpayers dollars," Prentice said.

To-date, almost 8,500 of the 10,500 claims received through the DRP have been resolved and Municipal Affairs Minster Diana McQueen said the process is nearing an end. MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO

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‘Anytime’ diploma exams gaining support: Minister

More flexibility for diploma exam writers is an idea being floated to the school boards by Alberta’s minister of education as he meets with trustees across the province.

Education Minister Gordon Dirks told Metro on Sunday that he’s received a lot of support for the idea of “anytime student-ready” diploma exams — the opportunity for students to write or challenge the standardized provincial test any time throughout the year.

While the idea is still in the theoretical stage, Dirks said he plans on bouncing the concept off more school board members over the next 10 days.

“These days, students are completing courses at different times of the year,” he said. “Some of them online, some of them in other ways, some of them in regular classrooms, so it may make sense to investigate this notion further and see whether or not it has validity as something that should be considered as policy.”

Edmonton public school board chairman Michael Janz said the board is always supportive of giving students more flexibility when it comes to writing their exams.

“I think for some students who wish to challenge a course or are involved in athletics and don’t fit into the usual offering schedule, this would be an opportunity for them to take ownership of their learning ... and improve our high school completion (rate),” he said.

Last year, the board voted to lobby the government to drop the weight of the diploma exam from 50 per cent to 30 per cent.

“Fifty per cent is a very heavy weighting for an exam to be writing on one day at one time and it can be quite variable on what exam (students) get to write,” Janz said.

LEAH HOLOIDAY/METRO IN EDMONTON

Education Minister Gordon Dirks is touring the province, meeting with school board trustees. METRO FILE

‘The revolution is still continuing’

Egypt. Crowd gathers outside Calgary City Hall to ‘commemorate the revolution’ that ousted Hosni Mubarak in 2011

JENNIFER FRIESEN
calgary@metronews.ca

Dozens of protesters gathered outside Calgary City Hall Sunday to mark the fourth anniversary of the 2011 uprising that toppled Egyptian autocrat Hosni Mubarak and to condemn the Egyptian military’s assumption of control of the country in 2013.

“Today we’re here to commemorate the revolution,” said organizer Mohamed Hassanin. “And we’re here to tell the military regime in Egypt that the revolution is still continuing — and it’s going to continue until its demands of freedom, justice and individual liberty are met.”

The crowd chanted: “From the Nile to the sea, Egypt, Egypt will be free.”

It was four years ago that Egyptians toppled the 30-year reign of Mubarak, an event followed by the country’s first open elections in 2012 that saw Islamist President Mohammed Morsi come to power. Morsi was then deposed by the military in 2013, a move supported at the time by many of the more secular citizens of the sharply polarized country.

The new president, Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, has cracked down hard on public protests and adopted a law forbidding all demonstrations that don’t have prior approval.

Since el-Sissi and the military took control of the country, as least 2,588 demonstrators have been killed in Egypt, according to the Egyptian Canadian Coalition for Democracy.

On Sunday alone, at least 15 were killed as Egyptians gathered to mark the four-year anniversary of the initial uprising, and clashes broke out between el-Sissi’s supporters and critics.

Calgary demonstrator Sara Behairy, 22, was in Egypt in 2013 when the military assumed control of the government. She said that people were being shot in the streets, burned alive and imprisoned.

“This means a lot to me because Egypt has been under this dictatorship for over 30 years,” she said. “Thousands of Egyptians have been killed; it’s very unjust and that’s not the Egypt that we want.”

A demonstrator waves an Egyptian flag outside city hall on Sunday as dozens gathered to mark the fourth anniversary of the 2011 uprising that toppled Hosni Mubarak. JENNIFER FRIESEN/FOR METRO

Quoted

“Thousands of Egyptians have been killed; it’s very unjust and that’s not the Egypt that we want.”

Demonstrator Sara Behairy, 22, who was in Egypt in 2013 when the military took control

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PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATION NOTICE OF NOMINATION MEETING

The Calgary-Hawkwood PC Association is seeking nominations for individuals interested in becoming the candidate to represent the Constituency and the Progressive Conservative Association of Alberta in the upcoming election. The nomination period to obtain information, complete the nomination papers, and pay the nomination fee will commence at 12:00 p.m. (noon) on Sat. Jan 31, 2015 and will close at 12:00 p.m. (noon) on Saturday, Feb. 7, 2015. The nomination meeting (if necessary) will be held at 9 a.m., followed by voting, which will continue until 5p.m. on Sat. Feb. 21, 2015 at the Arbour Lake Community Centre NW, 12 Arbour Lake Place NW. Voters shall be members in good standing of the PCAA, must ordinarily reside in Calgary-Hawkwood, be a Canadian citizen, and be at least 14 years of age. When voting, members must show PCAA Membership card and two (2) pieces of identification, at least one of which must be photo identification. In the Constituency of Calgary-Hawkwood there are the communities of Arbour Lake, Citadel (west of Sarcee Trail), Hawkwood, Ranchlands, and Silver Springs. Interested parties may obtain further information, sets of nomination papers and details of the nomination process from the **Nomination Chairperson, Joel Christie, e-mail: calgaryhawkwood2014@gmail.com**

Jennie Esdale stands by the empty lot that was once home to the Green Fools Theatre before the area was devastated by the 2013 floods. JENNIFER FRIESEN/FOR METRO

Flooding inspires new puppet show

Arts. Green Fools Theatre is showcasing a new act that will feature a puppet named Peep whose house is swept away

In 2013, Jennie Esdale answered a knock on her door to find that her life's work was about to be swept away.

Police told her she had two hours to evacuate the Green Fools Theatre before the June floods were expected to reach its doorstep.

After a 20-year run of puppet shows and circus acts, the Green Fools Theatre was condemned. They lost their venue along with thousands of dollars in material and art.

"It was scary," said Esdale, the co-artistic director of the theatre. "We had everything in suitcases and we were out of a space."

More than a year has passed since the closure, but the theatre has found a new home in Sunalta and is gearing up for their new show: Peep, a puppet show inspired by the floods.

Through hand-crafted puppets, masks and music, the one-woman show will follow a young mouse named Peep after her house is destroyed by a sudden flood.

"I think we were all impacted by the flood," she said. "It was a pinnacle 'coming together' moment for us as Calgarians, and I think we still want to talk about it."

The Green Fools Theatre is fundraising through an InvestYYC campaign. Esdale expects the show to premier on Sept. 17.

JENNIFER FRIESEN/FOR METRO

Quoted

"It was a pinnacle 'coming together' moment for us as Calgarians."

Jennie Esdale, on how Calgary came together during its city-wide flooding

Ex-Wildrose leader sorry for speed of defection

MORGAN MODJESKI
morgan.modjeski@metronews.ca

Former Wildrose Party leader Danielle Smith has apologized to her constituents after her decision to join Alberta's Progressive Conservative Party late in 2014.

"It has been just over a month since I and a majority of my Wildrose colleagues made the decision to start a process to unify conservatives under the leadership of Premier Jim Prentice," the Highwood MLA wrote in a post on her Facebook page.

"It has not gone as expected. It has not been an easy path. It has angered a lot of people," the statement continued. "For that, I am truly sorry."

Smith says she has "no regrets" about leaving as the leader of the province's opposition, noting her former party membership was not headed in a direction she favoured.

However, in the statement she explains more time should have gone into consultation.

"In hindsight, it is clear that there needed to be more engagement and discussion to prepare Albertans for this change."

At a press conference in High River on Saturday, Smith took responsibility for the speed in which her defection to the PC Party took place.

"I would blame myself for that," Smith told a crowded room of reporters.

"I think I misunderstood just how angry people would be," she said. "I have to take responsibility for the fact that people were surprised."

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Glitter bomb biz giving sweet revenge

Canadians looking to get some revenge via glitter now have a homegrown solution.

Edmonton-based Josh Singer and his wife, Jessica, have launched SparklyRevenge.ca, and for a mere $9.99, they'll mail the target of your choice an envelope full of glitter that's guaranteed to "get everywhere."

"Heck, it's all over my dog right now," Singer said.

Singer got the idea from Ship Your Enemies Glitter, an Australian site that became an international sensation after launching earlier this month. Demand for so-called "glitter bombs" actually crashed the website, prompting its 22-year-old owner to call it quits.

Mua-ha-ha-ha

"You open it and it'll fall on your desk, but by next week it'll be all over your chair. Somehow it'll end up on your bathroom towel." Josh Singer, SparklyRevenge.ca

Despite its down-under origins, Singer believes glitter bombing fits in quite well with Canadians' mild-mannered sensibilities.

"People need a way to feel vindicated, and we're offering an outlet for that without causing anyone any harm," he said.

That said, while some of Singer's customers are out for revenge — one sent a glitter bomb to a "snake oil salesman" at a car dealership, for example — most are looking for a laugh.

"I think we receive a lot more jovial responses," Singer said. "People are mailing it to friends and family. One person even sent one with a note that said 'Hi mom.'"

LUKE SIMCOE/METRO

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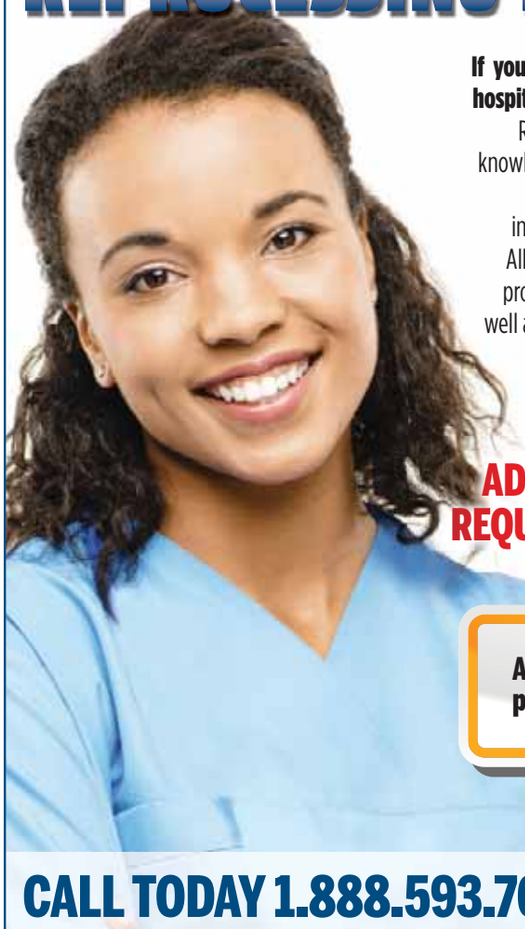

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A woman appears to take a photo of a child while others walk on an ice jam in the Bow River on Sunday afternoon in Calgary. MIKE MORRISON/FOR METRO

Ice jams and selfies don't mix: Fire chief

Bow River. Calgary fire department clears 15 people off 'perilous' ice jam, advises people need to 'make better assessments' before seeking photo ops

Fifteen people put themselves in a "perilous" situation by venturing out onto an ice jam in the Bow River Sunday — apparently in search of photo opportunities — just as Calgary was seeing record-setting temperatures for January, according to the fire department.

"Imminent danger would be another phrase that would come to mind," Battalion Chief Allan Ball said of the situation that developed around 5 p.m. between the Peace Bridge and Prince's Island Park.

"There's a reason why that ice is jammed up," Ball added. "It's moving, and it can break free or start to disintegrate at any time, and then we'd have a pile of people in the water and their chances of survival would be quite limited."

Ball said some of the people were looking to take photos of themselves on the picturesque river scene, and in one photo captured by an onlooker, a woman appears to be having a child pose while both stand on the ice.

Sunday afternoon was the warmest on record for Jan. 25 in Calgary, according to Environment Canada, as temperatures peaked above 17 C. The previous record high was 13.1 C, set in 2007. The record low, meanwhile, stands at -38.6 C, set in 1997.

Police also responded to the scene but Duty Insp. Travis Ibach said no criminal charges were warranted against any of the people who wandered onto the semi-frozen river.

ROBSON FLETCHER/METRO

Rundlehorn Dr.

Man in life-threatening condition; shooting suspected

Calgary police were photographing and examining the parking lot and storefront of a northeast Domino's Pizza on Saturday night after a suspected shooting sent a man to hospital in life-threatening condition.

Officers were called to the area in the 5300 block of Rundlehorn Dr. for reports of multiple gunshots around 8:30 p.m.

When officers arrived, they found an injured man suffering from what appeared to be bullet wounds.

At 12:30 a.m. Sunday, sections of the street were still closed off as officers collected evidence from the scene.

Evidence placards were visible and were placed strategically outside of the business. A number of police cruisers were in attendance restricting traffic and police say no suspects had been taken into custody as of press time. METRO

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Duty draws Auschwitz survivor to Poland

Holocaust. Miriam Friedman Ziegler says she was 'lucky enough to live' and wants the 'world to know' about what she endured

On a cold January day in 1945, nine-year-old Miriam Friedman Ziegler watched as Red Army soldiers approached Auschwitz. An army photographer captured the historic moment: 13 wide-eyed children — Friedman Ziegler among them — staring out through the fence.

The thought of freedom was a scary notion for the Jewish girl who'd spent a year in Auschwitz separated from the rest of her family.

"What's going to happen to me now?" she recalls thinking at the time. "I have nobody."

She would later reunite with her mother, but her father never made it out of the infamous Nazi camp alive.

Auschwitz has become a symbol of the horrors of the Holocaust, in which six million Jews were systematically killed.

Friedman Ziegler, who lives in Thornhill, Ont., is among about 100 survivors who are returning to Poland this week to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

"I swore I would never go back to Poland, but I feel it's my duty now to do it," Friedman Ziegler said during a recent Canadian Press interview.

On Monday, she will reunite for the first time with four of the girls — now women in their 70s and 80s — featured in the iconic photo. A new photo will capture the moment. This time, in the comfort of a hotel in Krakow, Poland.

Friedman Ziegler's journey began in 1940 in Radom, Poland, where her father ran a couple of stores. Life was idyllic, she said, until one day the Nazi tanks rolled into town. Her mother took off with Friedman Ziegler to her grandparents' house in a nearby town via horse and buggy. But the man driving the buggy tossed them en route, fearing for his life.

They eventually reached her grandparents, well ahead of the Nazi's eventual arrival.

Miriam Friedman Ziegler, 79, an Auschwitz holocaust survivor, shows her tattoo identification number as she tells her story at her home in Ontario on Jan. 19. Friedman Ziegler, who has rarely spoken about her time at the camp, will join 100 other survivors in Poland to mark 70 years since their liberation. NATHAN DENETTE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

However, when she turned eight, the Nazis caught them and loaded her and her parents in cattle cars and shipped them to Auschwitz.

The children were separated from the adults and placed in the adjacent Birkenau death camp, where Friedman Ziegler found some of her cousins, and others who would become lifelong friends.

One day the Nazis abandoned the camp temporarily and the children, including Friedman Ziegler, snuck off to Auschwitz where they raided the barracks for food and clothing and then returned to camp.

When the Nazis returned they asked anyone who wanted to walk to freedom to line up. They shot everyone in line.

Auschwitz was liberated on Jan. 27, 1945.

After Auschwitz, Friedman Ziegler spent time in various hospitals and orphanages in eastern Europe. Eventually, she came to Canada as part of a group of 1,000 child refugees.

She lived for a while in Hamilton with relatives — memories of death and suffering still fresh in her mind.

Two years later her mother came to Canada and the pair settled in Toronto. She eventually met her husband — also a Holocaust survivor — on a blind date. The couple has three children.

"I had a very, very good life," she said. "I never dreamt that I would live in such a beautiful place."

She has rarely spoken about what happened during the Holocaust, even to her family.

"I'm hearing some of these horrible stories for the first time," said her daughter, Adrienne Shulman, who is accompanying her mother to Poland.

The interviews and media attention has worn down Friedman Ziegler. She's emotional and ready to move on, but believes it is her duty to talk.

"I was lucky enough to live," she said. "I want the world to know." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Prime Minister Stephen Harper delivers a speech to supporters at a high school in Ottawa on Sunday. FRED CHARTRAND/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Response to terror: Online hate speech

Social media. Interconnectedness online helps make 'hate attacks' more damaging: Expert

The recent terror attacks in Paris have unleashed a barrage of anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant comments on the Facebook pages of federal politicians and their parties in Canada — much of it plainly visible to the public.

Managing racist, sexist, homophobic and harassing material is just one of the new challenges facing parties who want to have an active social media presence, grounded in the concept of free speech and open dialogue.

A Jan. 7 post on Stephen Harper's Facebook account, in which the prime minister said he was "horrified by the barbaric attacks in France," received approximately 575 comments. Some six dozen — expressing support for blocking immigration from Islamic countries, closing Canada's borders or just criticizing Islam — were still on the page two weeks later.

"Time to step down on all Islamic communities worldwide," wrote one visitor to the page.

Said another, "All Muslims should go home and never be let back here please Mr. Harper make that happen they steal real people's jobs that belong to us Canadians."

A Jan. 14 Conservative Party of Canada Facebook post entitled Protecting Canadians from Barbaric Cultural Practices — aimed at promoting the government's legislation barring forced or child marriages — elicited similar sentiments.

Paula Todd, digital media professor and author of Extreme Mean: Trolls, Bullies and Predators Online, said some offensive speech should be left online so that it can be exposed and critiqued by others.

"We're discovering the effects of putting all this horrible stuff online," said Todd.

"One of the effects is that because it's 24 hours a day, because it flies around the world in seconds, and because it's permanent, these kinds of hate attacks can be more damaging than just the face to face." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Facebook 'like' not always literal 'like': Experts

A "like" shouldn't always be taken literally, say tech experts, who are closely watching the case of 13 Dalhousie University students suspended for their actions on Facebook.

The case is interesting for many reasons, including the fact that it exposes how users often don't appreciate that nothing is truly private online, said Aimee Morrison, an associate chairwoman in the English department at the University of Waterloo.

"We're in this moment with social media where people haven't quite modulated their behaviour in what is actually a pretty public space," said Morrison, who studies digital issues.

The 13 fourth-year dentistry students belonged to a school-related private Facebook group.

One of the students, Ryan Millet, has gone public to protest his suspension, claiming that he helped expose offensive posts in the group, including misogynistic comments about some female classmates.

Lawyer Bruce MacIntosh suggested at a recent news conference that his client, a father of three, didn't interact much with his fellow students outside of class and used the group to stay in touch.

Young people especially often place a very high value on having their photos and comments Liked and know their friends also crave that validation, said Matthew Johnson, director of education for the non-profit organization MediaSmarts, which researches how kids and teens are growing up in today's digital age.

"'Likes' are strongly taken as a measure of popularity," Johnson said.

"But young people do have to understand that when they're 'liking' something negative they are adding their own voice." THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Deadly rocket attacks kill 30, heighten tensions in Ukraine

Kyiv. Russian-backed rebels blamed for assault that killed civilians in the coastal city of Mariupol

Residents rally in Kyiv on Sunday in solidarity with victims of a rocket attack on Mariupol. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ukraine's president said Sunday that intercepted radio and telephone conversations prove that Russia-backed separatists were responsible for firing the rockets that pounded the southeastern city of Mariupol and killed at least 30 people and injured 95.

The attack on Mariupol, a strategically situated port city that had been relatively quiet for months, alarmed the West and looked likely to further aggravate relations with Russia.

Putting the blame on Moscow, President Barack Obama said the U.S. would work with its partners to "ratchet up the pressure on Russia."

European Union foreign-affairs chief Federica Mogherini later announced that EU foreign ministers would hold an "extraordinary" meeting in Brussels on Thursday to discuss Ukraine.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, speaking separately with Mogherini and U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, told them the Ukrainian government bore responsibility for the latest military escalation, according to statements released by his ministry.

Lavrov did not, however, directly address who had carried out the attack on Mariupol and said it should be investigated.

Separatist leader Alexander Zakharchenko initially announced that his forces had begun an offensive on the government-controlled city of Mariupol. But after the extent of civilian casualties became known, he backtracked and blamed Ukrainian forces for Saturday's carnage.

The rocket attack came a day after the rebels rejected a peace deal and announced they were going on a multi-pronged offensive against the government in Kyiv in a bid to seize more territory.

The rebel stance has upended European attempts to mediate an end to the fighting in eastern Ukraine that has cost at least 5,100 lives since April, according to United Nations estimates.

In Mariupol, UN workers handed out blankets to people left homeless or without heat because of the shelling, which hit schools, homes and shops.

"The city is in shock," Mariupol resident Yelena Khorshenko said. "The streets are empty, and people are boarding up their windows and preparing for the worst."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

France. Critics see free-speech hypocrisy

When cartoonists at a French publication that had poked fun at the Prophet Muhammad were shot dead, millions around the world felt it as an attack on freedom of speech.

Since the rampage that left 12 dead at the Charlie Hebdo offices and another four during a standoff with police at a kosher supermarket, French authorities have arrested dozens of people — including a comedian — for appearing to praise the terrorists or encourage more attacks. That has unleashed accusations of a double standard, in which free speech applies to those who mock Islam while Muslims are penalized for expressing their own provocative views.

French police have arrested more than 70 people since the attacks for allegedly defending or glorifying terrorism.

The most famous is comedian Dieudonne M'bala M'bala, charged over a Facebook post that says, "I feel like Charlie Coulibaly" — a merger of the names of Charlie Hebdo and Amedy Coulibaly, the attacker who killed four hostages.

French law bans promoting racial or religious hatred, as well as inciting or defending terrorism or crimes against humanity. Blasphemy, in contrast, is not illegal in France, so Charlie Hebdo's mockery of religion is regarded differently.

The arrests have been criticized by Amnesty International. "You have a French society that considers, not unjustly, that freedom of expression itself has come under attack," said Amnesty Europe Director John Dalhuisen. "You have to attack the criminals but not in a way that undermines the idea."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Spain

Brothers arrested to halt suspected terror-cell attack

Spanish police arrested four men in the country's North African enclave of Ceuta who allegedly had formed a terror cell.

Interior Minister Jorge Fernandez Diaz said investigators were struck by the similarities with the two French brothers who killed 12 people in the attack on Charlie Hebdo.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pakistan

Military planes hit rebels near Afghan border

Pakistani warplanes pounded militant sanctuaries near the northwestern Afghan border Sunday, killing 35 militants, the army said. The airstrikes took place in Datta Khel in the North Waziristan tribal region. The military has been conducting a major offensive there since June.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Anti-bailout party's win in Greece threatens to renew market turmoil

Syriza. Party won on promises to re-negotiate bailout deal and reverse austerity measures

A radical left-wing party vowing to end Greece's painful austerity program won a historic victory in Sunday's parliamentary elections, setting the stage for a showdown with the country's international creditors that could shake the eurozone.

Alexis Tsipras, leader of the communist-rooted Syriza party, immediately promised to end the "five years of humiliation and pain" that Greece has endured since an international bailout saved it from bankruptcy in 2010.

With 80 per cent of polling stations counted, Syriza had 36 per cent of the votes, versus 28 per cent for Prime Minister Antonis Samaras's conservatives.

It remained to be seen whether Syriza had enough seats to govern outright or would have to seek support from other parties. That might not become clear until Monday morning or even later, when all the votes are counted.

If Tsipras, 40, can put together a government, he will be Greece's youngest prime minister in 150 years.

The prospect of an anti-bailout government coming to power in Greece has sent jitters through the financial world, reviving fears of a Greek bankruptcy that could reverberate across the eurozone.

"The sovereign Greek people today have given a clear, strong, indisputable mandate. Greece has turned a page. Greece is leaving behind the destructive austerity, fear and authoritarianism. It is leaving behind five years of humiliation and pain," Tsipras told a crowd of flag-waving supporters.

He won on promises to demand debt forgiveness and renegotiate the terms of Greece's 240-billion-euro ($335-billion) bailout, which has kept the debt-ridden country afloat since mid-2010.

To qualify for the cash, Greece has had to impose deep and bitterly resented cuts in public spending, wages and pensions, along with public-sector layoffs and repeated tax increases. Its progress in reforms is reviewed by inspectors from the International Monetary Fund, European Commission and European Central Bank, collectively known as the troika, before each instalment of bailout funds can be released.

Tsipras pronounced the troika and its regular debt inspections "a thing of the past."

"The verdict of the Greek people ends, beyond any doubt, the vicious circle of austerity in our country," he said.

Greece's creditors insist the country must abide by previous commitments to continue receiving support.

The centrist Potami party was battling for third place with the Nazi-inspired Golden Dawn, whose leader and several lawmakers campaigned from prison, where they are awaiting trial on charges of participating in a criminal organization.

If Syriza falls shy of the 151 seats necessary to form a government on its own in the 300-seat parliament, it will have to seek support from other parties — either in a minority government or as part of a coalition. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Leader of Syriza left-wing party Alexis Tsipras speaks to his supporters Sunday outside Athens University. A triumphant Tsipras told Greeks that his radical left Syriza party's win in Sunday's early general election meant an end to austerity measures. PETROS GIANNAKOURIS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Debt

Austerity at an end?

Syriza's anti-bailout rhetoric appealed to many in a country that, in the past five years, has seen a quarter of its economy wiped out, unemployment above 25 per cent, and average income losses of at least 30 per cent. But the win has renewed doubts over Greece's ability to emerge from the crisis, and generated fears that the country's finances could shock global markets and undermine the euro. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Images of slain Egypt protester revive focus on police violence

Images of a mortally wounded protester, blood running down her face and hair as she was lifted from the pavement by a comrade, have touched off powerful criticism of Egypt's government on the anniversary of a revolution initially sparked by police brutality.

The photos and videos show a heavily armed police unit, with some members masked, shooting at a small, peaceful protest Saturday near Cairo's Tahrir Square in which 32-year-old Shaimaa el-Sabagh took part.

A labour rights activist with a history of involvement in protests that predated the country's 2011 revolution, el-Sabagh was also a poet and mother of a five-year-old boy.

She had travelled to Cairo from her home in Alexandria to attend the demonstration to demand police and officials be held accountable for protesters killed since the uprising four years ago that forced autocrat Hosni Mubarak from power.

She was killed by what authorities said was a blast of birdshot that pierced her heart and lungs from close range.

Mahienour el-Masry, an activist and friend of el-Sabagh's, described her as a firm believer in change who used to take her son along with her.

Her death renewed criticism of police use of force and the government's insistence that its crackdown is reserved for terrorists and violent protesters. A new page has already appeared on Facebook in her memory.

Security officials have sought to distance themselves from el-Sabagh's death, saying that they only used tear gas against the protest and that violent elements infiltrate rallies to "drive a wedge" between the people and the police.

During scattered small protests on Sunday, at least 13 protesters were killed in clashes in which police said they were attacked. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"I won't listen to anyone who undermines my resolve."

Shaimaa el-Sabagh, a 32-year-old activist who was shot and killed by police ar a peaceful protest Saturday in Cairo, Egypt.

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Fisher-Price looks for more diversity in its child models

Advertising. Toy maker sets up second studio in Buffalo to tap into the city's multi-cultural feel

"Baby wrangler" Melanie Ruskin keeps 21-month-old Noelle Roberts engaged while a photographer records the moment at a Fisher-Price studio in Buffalo, N.Y., earlier this month. The toy maker recently began photographing children in Buffalo to tap into the urban centre's more multi-cultural feel and better reflect the faces in the 150 countries where Fisher-Price toys are sold. CAROLYN THOMPSON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fisher-Price has long eschewed "professional" models for its packaging, instead using the babies and toddlers parents trundle in to the toy maker's headquarters in the quaint western New York village of East Aurora, about 32 kilometres from Buffalo,

The company recently began photographing children in a second studio in Buffalo to better reflect the faces in the 150 countries where its toys are sold.

"Everything that we do for Fisher-Price here goes everywhere, so all over the world, from packaging to websites to advertising," said Fisher-Price marketing executive Teresa Gonzalez Ruiz. "We need to make sure we have Hispanics, African-Americans, more Asian population."

"We've always done it. It's just a lot easier here," Gonzalez Ruiz said on a recent morning at the city studio inside a former industrial complex that has been converted for businesses. Fisher-Price plans to use the Buffalo studio for about 25 per cent of its 4,000 annual shoots.

With sunlight streaming through a wall of windows, 21-month-old Noelle Roberts rolled cars down a winding track as photographer Michael Mandolfo kneeled and lay on his stomach and snapped photos. "Baby wrangler" Melanie Ruskin played with Noelle, squealing and clapping to keep her engaged.

"She loves it," the toddler's mother, Nicole Roberts, said after the studio's team of stylists piled her curly hair into a top ponytail and picked out a pair of brightly striped leggings and a sweater for the shoot.

The pictures could end up on a box for the toy track, or in an advertisement.

Noelle, who earned $50 US for the session, was recruited by Gonzalez Ruiz, who spotted the brown-eyed African-American toddler with her mother inside a Buffalo drug store.

"She said 'Oh, she's so cute! You have to bring her,"' Roberts said.

Fisher-Price also reaches out to hospital maternity wards, immigrant groups and urban churches in search of a rainbow of newborns to five-year-olds. The company's internal marketers initially saw the need for more diversity, and it has raised the issue in the company's consciousness, Gonzalez Ruiz said. "We're not looking for specifics," she said. "For us, it's just making sure that we don't leave anyone out of the picture, that everyone feels included."

The city studio is more accessible by public transportation or on foot, saving parents a drive to East Aurora.

"This is perfect," said Nicole Roberts, who lives on Buffalo's west side. "I love the location."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Vancouver. Hundreds attend free coding camp

Squamish Nation member Khelsilem is fluent in his native tongue and passionately spearheading a project to revitalize indigenous languages. But he wants to turbocharge his linguistic proficiency by learning an entirely new and universal language — computer coding.

The 25-year-old from North Vancouver plans to preserve and share the Squamish and Downriver Halkomelem languages by acquiring coding skills, which he'll use to construct a website that gives his community's lingual traditions worldwide reach.

"Geography is the biggest challenge we have as indigenous people when it comes to revitalizing languages, there's so many languages in Canada and it becomes really hard to co-ordinate," he said.

Khelsilem was among two tables of 20 laptop-laden First Nations people adding their beat to the rhythmic key tappings of 500 British Columbians who gathered over the weekend for a massive computer coding bootcamp.

The humming hive filled a cavernous Vancouver conference space for The HTML500, the premier 2015 event in a four-city caravan teaching the ABCs of web coding.

The idea was to provide free lessons in basic coding languages, including HyperText Markup Language, known as HTML, that is standard code used in websites. Organizers hope the bootcamp prompts a mass movement towards "digital literacy."

The targeted inclusion of First Nations at the event was conceived to increase employability in Canada's aboriginal communities, while taking advantage of the fastest growing population of young people in the country to help fill jobs skill gaps.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Participants jam into a giant lecture hall in Vancouver on Saturday to learn computer coding skills at HTML500. JONATHAN HAYWARD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

N.Y. governor's plan for rail link to LaGuardia airport applauded

Travellers who endure a two-hour drive from midtown Manhattan to LaGuardia Airport in Queens are applauding what they see as a long overdue proposal from New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo: Build a rail link connecting the city to LaGuardia.

LaGuardia is one of just a few airports in major American cities not served by some sort of rail service. Neighbouring John F. Kennedy and Newark have it, and projects are underway at Washington Dulles, Los Angeles and Denver.

Cuomo's $450 million US proposal, made this past week on the eve of his State of the State address, follows his announcement last year for a $3.6 billion US renovation of the decrepit LaGuardia — famously dubbed by Vice-President Joe Biden as a "third-world" facility.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo's proposed rail link to LaGuardia Airport calls for an elevated AirTrain connecting the airport with the Willets Point station.

KATHY WILLENS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The plan calls for an elevated AirTrain that would connect the airport, located along Flushing Bay, with a busy transit hub about 2.5 kilometres away. The hub, with access to the city's subway and commuter railroads, is near Citi Field, home of baseball's Mets, and the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, home of the U.S. Open.

A start date for construction has not been set, and the Legislature must sign off on the project.

A 2014 survey found that 75 per cent of those travelling to LaGuardia from Manhattan took either taxis or private town cars. Only about seven per cent used bus service.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ukraine

Ed Fast talks free trade in Kyiv

International Trade Minister Ed Fast arrived in Kyiv on Sunday for two days of talks on free trade as fighting intensifies between Ukrainian forces and pro-Russian separatists in the east.

Fast also plans to announce four initiatives, including a program to promote growth for small and medium-sized farm businesses.

Canada and Ukraine do about $322 million in trade. The Harper government says it is looking for Canadian companies that want to invest in the agriculture and agri-food, aerospace, energy, mining and education sectors.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Romania

Protesters blame banks for high loan repayments

Hundreds of people have protested in Romania against high repayments for Swiss franc loans, blaming the banks for offering deceptively cheap loans and calling on the government to regulate hard currency loans.

About 75,000 Romanians have loans in Swiss francs, taking them out during the boom of the mid-2000s, because they had a lower interest rate.

They have been hit by a strong franc that increased by 40 per cent against the euro after the Swiss National Bank abolished its currency ceiling.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Alaska

Obama seeks wilderness tag for Arctic refuge

U.S. President Barack Obama is proposing to designate the vast majority of Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as a wilderness area, including its potentially oil-rich coastal plain, drawing an angry response from top state elected officials who see it as a land grab by the federal government.

The designation would set aside an additional 12.2 million acres as wilderness, including the coastal plain on Alaska's northeast corner, giving it the highest degree of federal protection available to public lands.

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VOICES

A NEW VISION: ZERO

Calgary, a city where pedestrians are struck and injured by cars every day, would do well to follow the example of New York City, which is aiming to eliminate all traffic deaths by 2024

KLASZUS' CALGARY
Jeremy Klaszus

If Calgary is serious about reducing pedestrian injuries and deaths, it can look to New York City for a convincing lesson on how to do it.

For five years now, Calgary has had more than 400 pedestrian injuries annually. That's disturbing; it works out to at least one person struck and injured by a vehicle per day.

In 2014, meanwhile, New York City had its number of pedestrian fatalities fall to its lowest point in a century. This reduction was no accident. New York City has enacted a suite of reforms to make pedestrians — and cyclists, and drivers, and anyone else who uses city streets — safer. In fact, the city is aiming to eliminate all traffic deaths, period, by 2024 through a plan called Vision Zero.

Vision Zero isn't about one group of street users blaming another. "The fundamental message of Vision Zero is that death and injury on city streets is not acceptable and that we will no longer regard serious crashes as inevitable," Mayor Bill de Blasio said when introducing the plan.

This isn't just empty talk. As I mentioned in a column last November, New York City recently dropped its citywide residential speed limit to 40 km/h. It took some doing: according to the New York Times, this was the first time the default residential speed limit had been lowered since 1964.

Making the change involved changing state traffic laws because speed limits were previously forbidden from dropping below 48 km/h citywide.

But they did it, and it seems to be paying off, with traffic deaths falling from 180 in 2013 to 132 in 2014.

(By comparison, over the past six years, the most pedestrian deaths we've seen in a single year were 11 in 2012. New York City, of course, has seven times our population and a greater ratio of pedestrians to drivers than we do.)

In Calgary, there hasn't been sustained public discussion on dropping the speed limit in residential areas — but there should be.

Hopefully this will be part of the pedestrian strategy the city is currently developing.

In the meantime, I've just started driving 40 km/h in communities as a matter of regular course. I started because of my experience walking my kids to school. In the school zone, cars slow down, but outside the zone they often whip past, going closer to 60 than 50 km/h.

This bugged me. If we're making drivers slow down right by schools, shouldn't they slow down everywhere people are walking? So I started slowing down to 40 km/h in our neighbourhood.

Then I thought: if I'm driving that conscientiously in Renfrew and Bridgeland, shouldn't I be doing the same in Lake Bonavista?

Going 40 km/h doesn't significantly add to my travel time (I still go the max speed on thoroughfares like Deerfoot and Glenmore), and I find I'm more relaxed than when I'm going 50 km/h non-stop. Where's the downside?

Your Calgary

Impressionistic beauty

Photo submitted by reader Mike Sidorenko

The bucolic good looks of Confederation Park in the winter are captured in an impressionistic manner in this shot.
CONTRIBUTED

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Upcoming

Regimental funeral for slain RCMP officer

St. Albert's streets will turn red Monday as the community comes together to remember Const. David Wynn. Wynn was shot in the head on Jan. 17 at the Apex Casino and passed away last week.

The service in St. Albert will be a full regimental funeral, and Premier Jim Prentice and Prime Minister Stephen Harper are both expected to attend. A procession will start at the corner of Poirier Avenue and Sir Winston Churchill Avenue at noon on Monday before the service, which will take place at Servus Place at 2 p.m. People have been asked to wear red on Monday to show their support for the RCMP. METRO

Ex-CTF Alberta director maps out next steps

Former Canadian Taxpayer Federation rabble-rouser Derek Fildebrandt is plotting his next political moves, and should his whereabouts be of importance to you, stay tuned.

Fildebrandt, whose Freedom of Information and Privacy (FOIP) requests of several government agencies during his tenure at the CTF regularly made provincial headlines, will be making a formal announcement on his future Monday.

He will be at the Strathmore-Brooks constituency office of MLA Jason Hale at 10 a.m. to make the announcement, which will be related to his involvement in the next provincial election.
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Gossip

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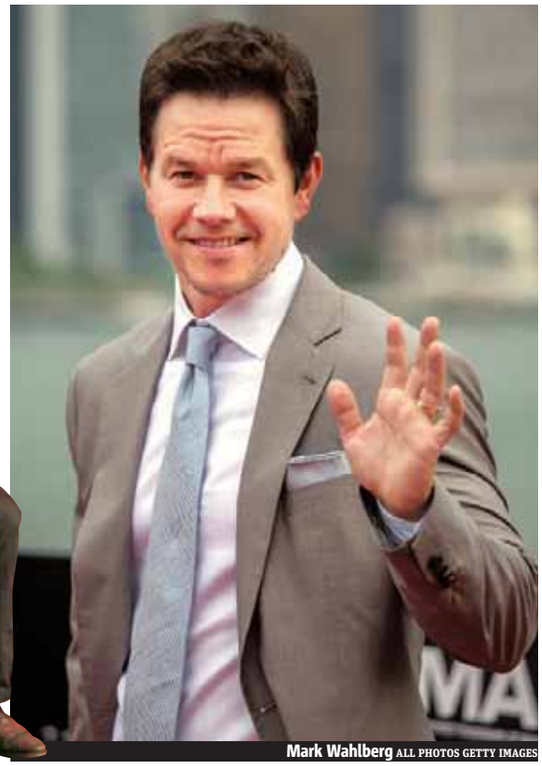
METRO'S TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES



Mark Wahlberg ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Once a racist, always a racist says Wahlberg's former victim

Mark Wahlberg is seeking an official pardon for his 1988 assault of two Vietnamese men while stealing beer in Boston.

But one of his former victims — from a separate attack — thinks that's a terrible idea.

"I don't think he should get a pardon," Kristyn Atwood tells the Associated Press. Atwood was among a group of mostly black elementary school children chased and pelted with rocks by a then-14-year-old Wahlberg and his friends in 1986.

"I don't really care who he is. If you're a racist, you're always going to be a racist. And for him to want to erase it, I think it's wrong."

Rodman invites Rogen to visit North Korea

Noted friend of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un Dennis Rodman is finally chiming in on the Sony hack and The Interview, the controversial Seth Rogen comedy that caused it all.

"If the North wanted to hack anything in the world, they are going to go hack a movie? Really?" he says.

The regular visitor to North Korea also has a plan to ease tensions caused by the film. "I would ask Seth and all those involved in the movie to go to North Korea with me. And then do an interview with me about the movie." I don't see Rogen going for that.

Marsha, Marsha, Marsha! Jan gets her own meme as Brady Bunch hits Netflix

Thanks to the Brady Bunch movies making it onto Netflix, and a generation of Tumblr-happy teens who weren't alive when the films came out discovering them, we have the "Sure, Jan" meme.

And Jennifer Elise Cox, the actress who played Jan Brady in the films, is just fine with that.

"They trolled me, and then I saw it and I absolutely loved it," Cox tells Vulture.

"My husband said to me, 'You've got to be in a meme if you want to be anywhere.' And then I was like, 'Wow, I feel so lucky that I ended up in one.'"

Sure, Jan.

Jennifer Elise Cox

Mandy Moore

Ryan Adams

Mandy and Ryan still cool, even as their marriage melts

Dang it, this one seemed like it had staying power.

"Mandy Moore and Ryan Adams have mutually decided to end their marriage of almost six years," report reps for the now-exes. "It is a respectful, amicable parting of ways, and both Mandy and Ryan are asking for media to respect their privacy at this time."

OK, two things:

First, there's no need to brag about how laid-back and easygoing your breakup is. We get it, you're so cool.

And second: Adams and Moore — or at least their reps — get major points for correctly using "media" as the plural noun that it is.

To help you cope with this news, think back to when they first started dating and how much that seemed to make absolutely no sense. Good times.

SCENE

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Greta Gerwig shines in quirky comedy Mistress America

Signature performance. Frances Ha star brings offbeat charm to latest Baumbach co-creation

Noah Baumbach and Greta Gerwig, the crack-pot team behind Frances Ha, have proven their delightful screwball talents once more with Mistress America, which premiered Saturday at the Sundance Film Festival. The film is a dreamy and idiosyncratic comedy about two enigmatic soon-to-be stepsisters who are just trying to figure out how they fit in the world,

One, Tracy (Lola Kirke, who audiences might remember from a bit part in Gone Girl) is an introspective Barnard freshman and aspiring writer who can't seem to find any friends. The other, Brooke (Gerwig), is a 30-year-old romantic and striver who lives in her own alluring, albeit delusional, reality.

Everything changes for Tracy when she enters Brooke's intoxicating world. She even begins to use Brooke as an inspiration for a short story about a tragic aging dreamer, Mistress America.

But plot is almost beside the point. The inspired situational and physical comedy, sharp, witty dialogue and synthy music propel the story forward as the characters get into stranger and stranger situations.

"I was thinking of these movies from when I was a teenager in the '80s, almost like a sub-genre of movies of people who get taken out of their comfortable lives and put into sort of strange environments," said Baumbach

"Like Something Wild and After Hours, like 'I'm being pulled into this crazy thing... and there's a motorcycle!'" brings added Gerwig.

Gerwig brings her signature quirky but effortless charm to Brooke, and Kirke more than holds her own in her first big role, with the help of an excellent supporting cast (Michael Chernus, Matthew Shear, Jasmine Cephas Jones, to name a few).

Baumbach fans will not be disappointed, but the movie, like Brooke, exists in its own universe, and might not be for everyone.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Greta Gerwig and director Noah Baumbach at the Sundance premiere of Mistress America. INVISION FOR FOX SEARCHLIGHT/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Comedy. Doc dedicated to Robin Williams explores misery's link to laughs

Theatrical release

Tribeca Film announced Friday it acquired Misery Loves Comedy for distribution and plans to release it theatrically in the spring.

Does the best comedy come from pain? And does that mean comedians are the most miserable people of all?

That's what comic Kevin Pollack wanted to discover in his documentary, Misery Loves Comedy, which premiered Friday at the Sundance Film Festival. He dedicated the film "in loving memory and gratitude" to his friend and mentor, Robin Williams, whose suicide last year came just as Pollack was finishing the project.

Pollack interviewed more than 60 comics, actors and funny folks to find out if comedy requires misery, and found the answer to be both yes and no.

"I just think you're funnier when you're miserable," said Jimmy Fallon.

"I think you have to at least know misery," Matthew Perry said.

Comic Amy Schumer said that, of her friends, those who are the funniest are also the most miserable.

Said Lewis Black: "In order to become a comic, you have to love watching yourself die."

Even two-time Oscar winner Tom Hanks said he spent "54 and 1/2 years of living in self-loathing."

The pain of life isn't limited to comics and performers, Pollack said.

"Everyone has suffered through misery," he said. "It is the human condition. And the performer or the writer or the filmmaker or the actor must figure out a way to articulate it in a way that makes it either relatable or universal." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kevin Pollack THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Look who's laughing now

Actress Uzo Aduba, winner of outstanding performance by a female actor in a comedy series and outstanding performance by an ensemble in a comedy series for Orange is the New Black, shows off her trophies at the Screen Actors Guild Awards on Sunday in Los Angeles. Metro's Ned Ehrbar was also roaming the red carpet; visit metronews.ca for his coverage of the awards.

ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

U.S. Netflix isn't as great as it seems

Analysis. We've all heard griping that programming selection south of the border is best, but quantity doesn't necessarily mean quality

Netflix U.S. may boast more offerings, but are you really missing out if those offerings include Poultrygeist: Night of the Chicken Dead? ISTOCK

Feeling left out and ignored by Netflix Canada?

Cheer up. It may not be as bad as it seems.

Previously unpublished data provided to the Toronto Star confirms the widely held suspicion that there is far more variety for Netflix viewers in the U.S. than in Canada.

Canadian Netflix subscribers can only view half of the movie and television titles available to Americans on the online streaming service.

But the data, which Netflix refuses to officially release, also suggests the Canadian list includes more hits and fewer stinkers.

The data was provided to the Star by Netflixable, a website offering a country by country periscope into 20 regions covered by the worldwide streaming service.

It shows that Canadian viewers can watch some hits that aren't available south of the border, including Blue Jasmine (2013), X-Men: First Class (2011), The Dark Knight Rises (2012), Black Swan (2010) and Batman: The Dark Knight Returns: Part 1 (2012).

"The Netflix U.S. and Netflix Canada services are treated differently by the company," said Michael Geist, a Star columnist and research chair in Internet and E-commerce Law at the University of Ottawa.

"The Netflix U.S. is focused on adding more choice with curation on subscriber interest coming later (i.e. make content available and determine whether to continue to offer based on interest)," Geist said in an email.

Some of the American titles that aren't available here include non-Oscar winners Poultrygeist: Night of the Chicken Dead (2006) and Vibrator (2003).

"The Canadian service — much like the other international services — is more curated from the start with the company trying to identify content of interest to the local market before it appears on the service," Geist said.

"A lot of people who have never done this make the assumption that the United States Netflix is the best," Josh Loewen, founder, owner and CEO of Netflixable, said in an interview.

"Their number might be the highest, but the quality of the titles (matters). There is no best," Loewen said. "Canada's got some great stuff that's exclusive to us."

Geist said there's another theory for the leaner Canadian playlist.

"The cynical view is that Netflix doesn't need to create a larger library for Canada since many Canadians know how to access the U.S. service," Geist said.

"That means Netflix pays for U.S. rights, but knows that others may find ways to access the content (and will subscribe on that basis)."

For its part, Netflix spokesperson Kiel Hume said the company does not release such data. "It's not a static service," Hume said in an interview.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

LIFE 3

Why it's time to stash some cash

Planning. Build up an emergency fund so that when the worst does happen, you'll have some options

GAIL VAZ-OXLADE
Gail blogs daily at gailvazoxlade.com

If you are ever laid off from work, wouldn't it be nice to know you had enough money set aside to keep a roof over your head and food in your belly until employment insurance kicks in? ISTOCK

Have you ever thought about what you'd do if you lost your job or got sick and the paycheques just stopped coming in? How would you pay your rent or your mortgage? Where would you get the money for food?

How about all those other expenses that gobble up your paycheque now? Sure, if you're terminated from work, there might be some Employment Insurance, but EI takes time to kick in, and it isn't very much. So what would you do to make ends meet?

The term the financial industry likes to use to describe that pile of money you stash away just in case is "emergency fund." But I like to call it my FU Account. That's because having money in the bank gives me the option of saying FU if I'm asked to compromise my standards. It also means that if a tree falls on my house I can say, "FU tree!" Man, I love my FU Account.

People who don't see the point in having an emergency fund are either shortsighted, or completely unwilling to stop spending all their money. They are so averse to taking a little bit of what they are blowing on crap and setting it aside that they're willing to brave the terrors of an emergency — and it's only a matter of time — without any kind of safety net.

Whenever I talk about an emergency fund, inevitably I get a barrage of excuses about saving the money. My favourites come from the people who just don't want to stop doing what they're doing.

From the small expenses such as a cellphone, buying bottled beverages or dropping the odd $20 on new makeup, to the people who spend gobs decorating and re-decorating their homes, eating lunch and dinner out, or taking vacations, people are unwilling to stop spending every red cent they make.

Do you have a gadget habit? Can't resist a new pair of shoes? Do you pick up a new magazine every time you're at the checkout? Believe it or not, you don't have to get a manicure. If you think a manicure is a need, you're delusional. And if you already own 10 pairs of shoes, the next pair is sheer indulgence. So is that bottle of nail polish, the new DVD, or the beer after work. They're all distractions from savings.

You don't have to start by saving a whack of money. This week, open up a high interest savings account and then arrange an automatic transfer to that account every month. Start with $30 — a dollar a day. That's not so much to not spend, now is it?

To build your FU account, look for ways to find more money. You know those coupons you use to save at the grocery store? Ship that money over to your FU Account. And that outfit you bought on sale last week? Send the difference to your FU Account. If you have money for cookies and pedis, you have money to build an emergency fund so that if the worst does happen, you've got some options.

How good would it feel to not have to panic when the car breaks down and you need to come up with an unpredictable $2,400? How much better would you feel if your baby, your mom or your partner gets sick and you knew you could take time off work, without pay, to see to their needs?

How much smarter would you feel if you got laid off from work and had enough money set aside to keep a roof over your head and food in your belly until EI kicks in — it's a pathetic amount, really — or you could get another job?

That'll likely take about six months (that's what the studies show, kids) so that's why you'll need to have enough to cover six months' worth of essential expenses. Make your savings automatic. If you decide to save $100 a month, have that amount auto-debited from your main banking account to your high interest savings account every month. You'll get used to living without that money in no time flat. And when the paycheques unexpectedly stop coming in, you'll be damn glad you have some money stashed away.

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Make it cash, not credit

- An emergency fund is cash you've accumulated so that you can have the money you need to keep things in balance when the crap hits the fan. Don't buy the BS that a line of credit is an emergency fund. That's just some lender trying to get rich off you.
- Some people have a problem with the concept of the money in their emergency fund just sitting there earning a pittance in interest, waiting to be called into active duty when the worst happens. Once they've built up a couple of thousand dollars, the vacation becomes a "sanity emergency," or they run up their credit cards and that becomes a "debt emergency."
- But anything you can predict having to spend money on is not an emergency — it should be a line item on your budget and become a planned spending category.

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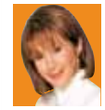
This recipe serves four. ROSE REISMAN

Serve kabobs your way

Lunch. These Beef Kaftas with Tahini Sauce can be presented with bread options or on their own



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FLASH FOOD

From your fridge to your table in 30 minutes or less

A Kafta is a Middle Eastern dish resembling the American burger, but with a different shape and flavour.

Traditionally it is made with lamb or beef, but you can also use ground chicken to lessen the calories and fat.

The use of mint and cilantro along with a dash of cinnamon give this ethnic dish its originality.

You can put the Kafta on skewers or just roll the meat into oval shapes and grill or bake it. You can also barbecue the meat rather than baking it.

This combination of flavours goes well with a homemade tahini sauce and diced vegetables. I love to serve Kaftas with naan bread or a soft bun.

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400 F. Combine all ingredients for Kaftas until well mixed. Form into 8 oval shapes and put 6-inch wooded skewer through middle (lengthwise) or omit the skewers if desired. On hot grill pan, sear outsides of kaftas then place on baking sheet and bake for 10 minutes or just until temperature reaches 160 F.

2. Meanwhile, make tahini sauce by mixing all ingredients.

3. Serve Beef Kaftas with tahini sauce and diced vegetables.

Ingredients

Kaftas
- 1 1/2 lb lean ground beef, lamb or chicken
- 1/2 cup minced onion
- 1 1/2 tsp minced garlic
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup unseasoned bread crumbs
- 3 tbsp chopped mint
- 1/4 cup chopped cilantro
- Salt and pepper

Tahnini Sauce
- 2 tbsp reduced fat mayo
- 2 tbsp reduced fat sour cream
- 2 tsp sesame oil
- 2 tsp soy sauce
- 1 tsp tahini paste

Garnish
- 1/2 cup diced tomatoes
- 1/2 cup diced cucumber
- Naan bread, soft roll

If you're using the naan bread or soft rolls, serve the Kaftas over the top and drizzle with tahini.

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First Student

Workplace blues can lead to problems with booze: Study

Career. Research shows longer work hours can increase the risk of alcohol abuse

It's true: working too hard can drive you to drink, say researchers who warn of the health risks of such dual excess.

An overview of studies covering more than 400,000 people showed that individuals who exceed 48 working hours per week are likelier to consume "risky" quantities of alcohol.

The paper, published in The BMJ journal, reported that long working hours boosted the likelihood of higher alcohol intake by 11 per cent overall.

People who worked 49-54 hours a week ran a 13-per cent higher risk of developing a "risky alcohol use" habit compared to counterparts who worked a 35-40-hour work week.

Those working 55 hours or more were 12 per cent more at risk.

"Risky" alcohol use was defined as more than 14 units per week for a woman and more than 21 for a man — levels that have been linked to a higher risk for liver and heart disease, cancer, stroke and mental disorders.

An alcohol unit is the equivalent of a third of a pint of medium-strength beer, half a 175-millilitre (six fluid ounces) glass of red wine with 12 per cent alcohol by volume, or a 25 ml-shot of whisky,

The findings add statistical backing to anecdotal evidence for a link between excessive work and alcohol abuse, the authors said.

More than a dozen developed economies were covered by the research, including Canada, Britain, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan and the United States.

"This meta-analysis supports the long-standing suspicion that among workers subjected to long working hours, alcohol can seem like a fast acting and effective way to dull work-related aches and pains and smooth the transition between work life and home life," Cassandra Okechukwu of the Harvard School of Public Health wrote in an editorial.

Long working hours have previously been linked to cardiovascular disease, depression and anxiety.

The increased risk of developing a "risky" drinking habit from over-work was small in absolute terms, Okechukwu said.

Also, having a job was associated with a lower prevalence of alcohol consumption and a higher chance of recovery from alcohol misuse than being unemployed.

Even so, the risk should be taken seriously.

"Any exposure associated with avoidable increases in disease or health damaging behaviour, or both, warrants careful examination," said Okechukwu.

"Indeed, these findings could add impetus to further regulation of working hours as a public health intervention."

AFP

If you feel your health is being compromised by your work schedule, it may be time to address it with your manager. ISTOCK

Quoted

"This meta-analysis supports the long-standing suspicion that among workers subjected to long working hours, alcohol can seem like a fast acting and effective way to dull work-related aches and pains and smooth the transition between work life and home life."

Cassandra Okechukwu
The Harvard School of Public Health

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Humana Challenge

Haas gets 1-shot win at La Quinta

Bill Haas pulled ahead with a 20-foot birdie putt on the par-4 16th and parred the final two holes for a one-stroke victory Sunday in the Humana Challenge.

Haas closed with a 5-under 67 for his sixth PGA Tour title and first since the 2013 AT&T National. He won the 2010 event at PGA West for his first tour victory.

Haas was making his first start since November. He took the long break to rest his left wrist, fractured in April when he fell down stairs at Hilton Head.

Matt Kuchar, Charley Hoffman, Brendan Steele, Steve Wheatcroft and Sung Joon Park tied for second.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NBA

Valanciunas' double-double leads Raps to win

Jonas Valanciunas had 20 points and 11 rebounds as the Toronto Raptors held off a late charge by the Detroit Pistons for a 114-110 victory on Sunday.

It was Valanciunas's team-best 14th double-double of the season

DeMar DeRozan had 25 points and six rebounds with four assists for Toronto (29-15), which has now won back-to back games. All-star point guard Kyle Lowry had 11 points and eight assists for the Raptors.

Lowry addressed the sold-out crowd from half-court before the game, thanking them for their support in voting him a starter in the NBA all-star game. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Columbus hosts goal display like no other

NHL. Team Toews and Team Foligno combine for record number of tallies in all-star game

All-star game

17	12
Team Toews	Team Foligno

The Flames' Johnny Gaudreau, representing Team Toews, shoots against Blues goalie Brian Elliott, of Team Foligno, on Sunday night at the NHL all-star game in Columbus, Ohio. KIRK IRWIN/GETTY IMAGES

By the time players finished scoring a record 29 goals at the NHL all-star game, they agreed that there was one loud, ear-piercing negative: The cannon at Nationwide Arena.

"I hate the cannon," Philadelphia Flyers captain Claude Giroux said.

Florida Panthers goaltender Roberto Luongo added that the cannon wasn't his favourite part of the weekend either.

The cannon went off more times in one game in the building than ever before, marking goals by the team led by Nick Foligno of the host Columbus Blue Jackets. Team Toews beat Team Foligno 17-12 in the mid-season exhibition featuring many of hockey's top stars playing shinny with no hitting, no defence and no mercy for goaltenders.

"That's all we're really doing out there is having fun and kind of trying to show our skill at the same time," Chicago Blackhawks winger Patrick Kane said.

And a lot of goals, breaking the record set in 2001 in Denver when North America beat the World 14-12. This one was a wide-open affair in which all but three players registered at least a point.

Jakub Voracek of the Philadelphia Flyers had six points on a hat trick and three assists, tying Mario Lemieux's 1988 record.

"I think it's a little different, Voracek and Lemieux, right?" said Voracek, the former Blue Jackets winger who also leads the NHL in scoring at the all-star break. "Three secondary assists. I'll take it, but I wouldn't make a big deal out of it."

Despite tying Lemieux, Voracek was not the most valuable player. Hometown star Ryan Johansen received that honour as part of an online fan vote.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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At 6-feet-4 and 221 pounds, Brandon Browner adds an edge to the New England Patriots' defence. But he can also be a liability, having committed 13 penalties this season. STEVEN SENNE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Browner ready to play for second ring

NFL. Now a Patriot, former Seahawks' giant missed Seattle's Super Bowl win because he was suspended for substance abuse

Brandon Browner received a Super Bowl ring last year even though he was watching from home 3,000 miles from the Seattle Seahawks when they won.

Now the hard-hitting cornerback has a shot at more diamonds and another title, going face-to-face with receivers when the New England Patriots play his former team Sunday.

It's a matchup Browner craved after missing last season's Super Bowl under suspension for violating the NFL's substance abuse policy, He signed with the Patriots in March.

"It's crazy, man," Browner said. "I really had that vision when I signed here. Hopefully, we'd meet up with my old boys and it happened to work out that way."

While Seattle was pounding Denver 43-8 in New Jersey to win the championship, Browner watched from his Los Angeles-area home, frustrated he couldn't be on the field.

At 6-feet-4 and 221 pounds, Browner has a physical style that can intimidate opponents but also hurt the Patriots. He committed 13 penalties while playing in nine regular-season games. He hasn't backed off.

Now he has added incentive — a chance at a second straight NFL title against a team for which he has no ill feeling.

"I was blessed and fortunate," said Browner, who served another four-game suspension in 2012, also for violating the NFL's substance abuse policy.

"I was suspended over there and I was still able to get a ring. That was a decision by the coach and the owner to give me that. They didn't have to."

Next up for Browner is Seattle quarterback Russell Wilson, a constant threat who can turn busted plays into critical ones — such as his two-point conversion pass after a scramble in Seattle's 28-22 win over Green Bay for the NFC title.

Browner will try to cover his receiver to keep Wilson from completing a pass.

"I'm fortunate to be back in this thing the following year with a good football team, and with a bond that I've built with these guys like the one I built with the guys over there. It's a good feeling."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Former CFLer

Brandon Browner spent four years in the Canadian Football League with the Calgary Stampeders, adding up 206 tackles. He helped the team win the 2008 Grey Cup and was named an all-star that year.

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→ See the full instructions on Metro's Voices page.

Horoscopes by Sally Brompton

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
A problem can quite easily be resolved, by ignoring it. This is a situation where something is an issue only because you choose to think of it as an issue.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
Be careful what you say today because if you leave any doubt about your meaning someone could take your words the wrong way and cause a scene.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
Force yourself to look on the bright side today. According to the planets you have nothing to worry about but you may have to trick yourself into believing it.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
This is potentially an excellent time for you but you find that hard to believe. Why? Mercury is playing tricks on your mind. A few days from now something remarkable, and most welcome, is going to happen.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Don't dwell on negative news as the week begins, especially if it involves someone you care for. The planets say you're taking the situation too seriously.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
This may be a confusing day as the signals you get from co-workers are jumbled. Your best course of action is to ignore their words and focus on body language. It will speak.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Your logic circuits don't seem to be functioning, most likely because mind planet Mercury is in one of its retrograde phases. If in doubt, listen to what your inner voice is trying to tell you.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
The planets warn this is not a good time to take chances as cosmic activity in one of the more sensitive areas of your chart is clouding your ability to separate fact from fiction.

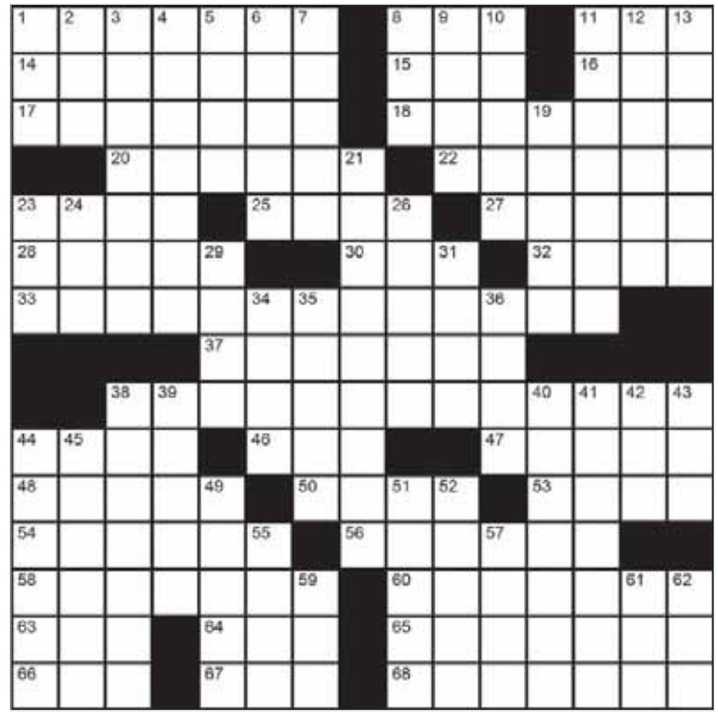
♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
You may find it hard to tell the good guys from the bad guys today, so be on your guard and take nothing for granted. You could also read too much into perfectly normal situations, so don't jump to conclusions.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
If something about your cash flow situation is bothering you chances are it is mainly, if not entirely, in your mind. So don't think, just act instinctively.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Don't get carried away by your own enthusiasms. You will get your chance to shine but pushing too hard could be counter-productive.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You will have to deal with someone's negative emotions today, without getting negative or emotional yourself. Smile.

Crossword: Canada Across and Down by Kelly Ann Buchanan



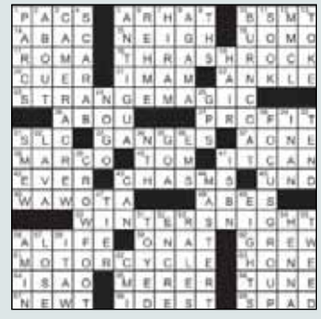
Across

1. CBC's new comedy starring Eugene Levy and Catherine O'Hara, "__ Creek"
8. Director Mr. Lee
11. British mother, colloquially
14. There's no one like 'her' in The Turtles tune
15. Caviar
16. Lab eggs
17. Carnivorous dish: 2 wds.
18. Palais des __ (Montreal convention centre)
20. Circle of latitude north of the Equator, __ of Cancer
22. Primps
23. Okinawa seaport
25. The Hollies song, when tripled
27. Result
28. Tony-winning actress Judith, and surnamesakes
30. '_' __ in Queensville
32. Conform to commands
33. Engineering marvel connecting Cape Breton to mainland Nova Scotia: 2 wds.
37. "Beauty and the Beast" (1991) candelabra character
38. "The __ __ __": Rush song that goes "Begin the day with a friendly voice..."
44. Really cry
46. L's spelling
47. Era
48. Also known as...
50. Price listing word
53. Romantic's creation
54. Fractured finger fixer
56. Howie __, Canadian hockey analyst
58. 1960s series, "Dr. __"
60. She gave Theseus thread to escape the Minotaur's labyrinth
63. 'Serpent' suffix
64. __-de-sac
65. Time in a recording studio
66. Mr. Beatty
67. Essential
68. Reverences

Down

1. School yr. part
2. NBA Cavs, on a scoreboard
3. Infidel
4. New-assignments-holders on desks
5. Classic TV mouse, __ Gigio
6. Vacations
7. Don't give up, __ __ through
8. Curve
9. Cute-sounding denial
10. Sort or style
11. BC: One of the two big Haida Gwaii islands
12. Street sort
13. Toronto-born actor Raymond who starred on #58-Across
19. Birthplace of Columbus
21. City in BC
23. Ms. Kidman, to pals
24. Ms. Gardner
26. Promenade
29. Prefix meaning 'Sun'
31. Feudal worker
34. Medical breakthrough
35. "...inch and he'll take _ __."
36. "The Way We __" (1973)
38. Guzzled
39. Tartan
40. Placate
41. Options-in-a-desperate-situation
42. Wintertime surface
43. Electrical resistance unit
44. __-Robbins ice cream chain
45. __ skiing
49. Coffee break treat
51. Quit
52. "__ hoping!" (Dreamer's exclamation)
55. Genuine
57. 'Sun' suffix (Big name in oranges)
59. English cathedral town
61. __ de plume
62. Nav. rank

Friday's Crossword



Online

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

Friday's Sudoku

6	5	1	7	4	2	8	3	9
3	2	8	6	9	1	4	5	7
4	9	7	5	8	3	6	1	2
7	3	5	2	1	4	9	6	8
9	6	4	3	7	8	5	2	1
1	8	2	9	6	5	3	7	4
5	1	9	4	2	6	7	8	3
2	7	3	8	5	9	1	4	6
8	4	6	1	3	7	2	9	5

Today's Sudoku

	7	2	9	1	6			
		8			5	2	7	
		6			2			3
	5					8		9
8							2	4
9							3	
	1					5		
		7			9			
			6	8				

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